

Child Safety

Code of Conduct



Purpose

Arts Centre Melbourne (ACM) provides an open, safe and friendly environment for all children. This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults toward children. The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It provides guidance to employees on how best to support children and prevent or better manage difficult situations.

Scope

All people who may work with children at any time at ACM must abide by this Code of Conduct. This includes:

- employees
- volunteers
- contractors and sub-contractors including workshop facilitators and arts learning teachers
- work experience students/interns/secondments
- any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children
- presenters utilising ACM venues

(Note: In this Code of Conduct, the term “ACM team member” is used to cover all persons occupying any position listed above.)

Code of Conduct

ACM team members are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children by complying with the following:

- ✓ Adhere to our child safe policies
- ✓ Take all reasonable steps to protect children from the risk of abuse
- ✓ Treat all children with dignity, equality and respect
- ✓ Listen to and value the ideas and opinions of children
- ✓ Act as a positive role model in their conduct with children
- ✓ Develop positive relationships with children and parents based on mutual trust and open communication
- ✓ Be professional in your actions through your use of language, presentation and manner
- ✓ Respect the privacy of children, parents and employees, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know
- ✓ Be aware of risks with communication and behaviour between adult team members and children (including online and mobile)
- ✓ Be aware of risks with communication and behaviour between children (including online and mobile)

Child Safety | Code of Conduct

- ✓ Promptly report any breaches of these standards of behaviour to the ACM Child Safety Officer or Frontline Child Safety Officer
- ✓ Aim to ensure children understand they are valued members of the production, program or audience experience
- ✓ Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of all children, in recognition that enjoying their childhood without undue pressure is important
- ✓ If by chance any children are found unsupervised, direct and accompany children to their supervisor or relevant management immediately.

ACM team members MUST NOT:

- ✗ Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender (including transgender status), cultural background, religion, vulnerability (including disability) or sexuality
- ✗ Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children
- ✗ Engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them
- ✗ Photograph or video a child without the informed consent of the child's parents
- ✗ Publish any video or image of a child (including on social media) without the informed consent of the child's parents
- ✗ Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- ✗ Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse (refer to Attachment C for guidance on recognising the signs of child abuse)
- ✗ Show overly familiar physical affection towards children or any unnecessary physical contact with children
- ✗ Marginalise or exclude specific children
- ✗ Show favouritism towards specific children such as the offering of gifts, special thanks, special treatment or inappropriate attention
- ✗ Subject children to any form of physical punishment, social isolation, immobilisation or any other conduct likely to humiliate or frighten children
- ✗ Enter children's dressing rooms (unless they are a designated supervisor, or approved to do so by a supervisor or relevant management)
- ✗ Allow children to enter an adult's dressing room or crew areas, unless accompanied by their supervisor and approval has been granted by those in the dressing room
- ✗ Close doors in rooms where children are present, unless children need privacy to dress
- ✗ Allow children to (un)dress with others around (dressing should take place in private)
- ✗ Do things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or dressing

Child Safety | Code of Conduct

- ✘ Take photos of children without explicit permission from both relevant management and a parent/s
- ✘ Gossip in the presence of children
- ✘ Distress a child for the purpose of eliciting a dramatic reaction
- ✘ Develop any 'special' relationships with children outside of the professional relationship or arrange contact with children outside of work obligations
- ✘ Have unauthorised contact with children online or by phone

Attachment A – Definitions

Key Term	Definition
ACM	The Victorian Arts Centre Trust trading as Arts Centre Melbourne
ACM Management	Director, Executive Director or the Chief Executive Officer.
ACM Child Safety Officer	Director, Strategy & Governance
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The Chief Executive Officer of Arts Centre Melbourne.
Child	Includes children and young people under the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified by law). In the case of the Child Employment Act 2003, it means a person under 15 years of age.
Child Abuse	Refer Attachment B for definitions of Child Abuse.
Director	A member of ACM Management who reports directly to an Executive director or the Chief Executive Officer and has responsibility for leading a Business Unit.
Executive Director	A member of the Executive management team and a direct report to the Chief Executive Officer.
Frontline Child Safety Officer	The Duty Manager at that time.
Manager	A senior employee who directs the work of other Arts Centre Melbourne team members within a specific segment or unit of the business.
Team member	<p>An individual who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) employed directly by ACM; b) indirectly employed through ACM (including by way of a consultancy, agreement or contract) such as through funds administered by ACM; or c) a temporary employee. <p>For the purposes of this policy, the term ‘team member’ includes volunteers, contractors and sub-contractors including workshop facilitators and arts learning teachers, work experience students, interns and secondments, and any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children.</p>
Temporary employee	A person who is approved to use the facilities of ACM for a temporary assignment, observation or research or a short term consultancy agreement. Types of temporary workers who fall into this category include volunteers, visiting research fellows and students.
Trust	The Victorian Arts Centre Trust.

Attachment B – What is Child Abuse?

Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Sexual offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour. Grooming refers to a person over 18 years communicating (including online or via mobile) with a child or with a person who supervises or has authority for a child with the intention to create a situation that enables them to abuse a child.

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Serious neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety and report the incident to the ACM Child Safety Officer (Director, Strategy and Governance).

Source: Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (November 2015), *An overview of the Victorian child safe standards*

Attachment C – Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse

Type of Abuse	Possible Indicators	
	Physical	Behavioural
Physical violence	Unexplained bruises Burns and/or fractured bones	Showing wariness or distrust of adults Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury) Fear of specific people Unexplained absences Academic problems
Sexual offences	Presence of sexually transmitted diseases Pregnancy Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge	Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age Difficulty sleeping Being withdrawn Complaining of headaches or stomach pains Fear of specific people Showing wariness or distrust of adults Displaying aggressive behaviour
Emotional or psychological abuse	Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development Physical signs of self-harming	Exhibiting low self-esteem Exhibiting high anxiety Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful Self-harming
Serious neglect	Frequent hunger Malnutrition Poor hygiene Inappropriate clothing	Stealing food Staying at school outside of school hours Aggressive behaviour Misusing alcohol or drugs Academic issues

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Source: Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (November 2015), *An overview of the Victorian child safe standards*

Supporting Documentation

a) Forms and Records Management

Forms or records that are generated by the Code are as follows:

Record	Retention Period	Location
Child Participant Image Release Form	7 years	Electronic filing system

b) Related Policies and Procedures

Policy or Procedure
Child Safety Policy
Child Safety Complaints and Reporting Procedure

Governance

a) Responsibility

Procedure Owner	Director, Strategy and Governance
Approving Executive	Chief Executive Officer

b) Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	March 2017	Chief Executive Officer	First version
Post Implementation Review			
Due Date			February 2018